

Folsom, PA — Congressman Joe Sestak spoke Friday evening at the induction ceremony for the new officers of the Herbert Best Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 928 in Folsom.

Joe commended outgoing Commander of Post Bob Stanton for his service and congratulated Nick Constantine on his elevation to the position. Jean Taylor was promoted to Senior Vice Commander and Gerry Gavin was sworn in as Junior Vice Commander.

Joe also congratulated the new officers of the Ladies Auxiliary, President Monique Constantino, Senior Vice President Lorraine Crespy, and Junior Vice President Margaret Katalina.

“Our men and women in uniform have served our country courageously and performed brilliantly – just as they always do,” said Congressman Sestak. “As we honor these new officers, we must, as always, remember those who have fallen, those who continue to stand up for those who are still fighting overseas, and those who have finished their service with honor.”

Since he has been in Congress, Congressman Sestak has been fighting for the men and women who have served and who are currently serving in our armed forces. He successfully passed two amendments to H.R. 1538, the Wounded Warrior Assistance Act, which will improve mental health care for our wounded soldiers. The first amendment highlights the fact that mental health care is an essential component to the medical services offered to our Veterans and the members of our Armed Services by clarifying that ‘medical care’ as defined in H.R. 1538 includes mental health care services.

The second amendment requires the Secretary of the Department of Defense to develop a plan to help prevent Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and other stress-related psychopathologies (including substance abuse conditions) from developing in our military service members. In addition, it requires the Secretary to submit to Congress within 180 days a plan for establishing a Peer-Reviewed research program within the Defense Health Program’s research and development function to research the prevention of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and how to best strengthen the psychological resiliency of our military service members. Both amendments passed with unanimous support.

Congressman Sestak also supported the Defense Authorization Bill, which provided funds for a number of important provisions for military personnel.

The Defense Authorization Bill:

- Provides resources that take care of our service members and their families by authorizing a 3.5% across-the-board pay raise (.5% above the Administration's proposal) for all service members, which reduces the pay gap between the military and private sector to 3.4%;
- Prohibits increases in soldier health TRICARE and pharmacy user fees, which the Administration proposed to do in the midst of a war;
- Ensures our soldiers are receiving adequate medical health care to tackle the growing problem of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder by investing in the Mental Health Initiative and the Traumatic Brain Injury Initiative; and
- Allows returning service personnel to authorize the Defense Department to provide their medical and health information to the Veterans Affairs Department.

"As someone who wore the uniform, few things are more important to me than our obligation to support our veterans, especially our aging veteran population who served during WWII and the Korean War," said Sestak. "Equally important, I will be launching soon the Veterans History Project in conjunction with the Library of Congress. It is vital that we record and preserve the personal recollections of our veterans as a national treasure."

Congressman Sestak also voted earlier in the year to increase funding in the continuing resolution for veterans health care by \$3.6 billion to provide health care for 325,000 veterans.

Congressman Sestak is a former three-star Admiral in the U.S. Navy and is the highest ranked officer ever elected to Congress.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives.

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